

Springfield, PA – Last Saturday, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-7) spoke to the Darby Creek Valley Association's (DCVA) Annual Meeting at the Springfield Friends Meeting. The event was open to all members, prospective members, and interested community residents. At the meeting, directors and officers of DCVA were elected for the coming year.

"I had previously met with Jeff Featherstone, an expert in flood plain mapping from Temple University," noted Joe. "We are currently using maps from the 1970s that have different standards and are out of date.

Consequently, local ordinances and developers state that certain people are living in flood plains when in fact they are not, and vice versa. This has significant impact not just on insurance rates, but it also means that we are developing and doing water management on bad data, which in some cases could be compounding the problem as developers try to follow ordinances that are based on bad data; or we are ignoring issues that need to be addressed; or we are not fixing items that need to be fixed. We need to do this."

At the event, Joe discussed the Darby conservation plan. "The Darby conservation plan is excellent in many regards as a way ahead in regards to how to get more wetlands and how to do proper watershed management; however, it had to be based upon the only available mapping that is unfortunately dated, and not done with newer more precise technology that can account for higher levels of precipitation, something about contours, etc."

"It will take time and resources but it needs to be done with other major creek organizations in the district. I'm pleased there will be a follow-up meeting. I believe there needs to be a holistic approach to watershed management in the district where the major watersheds include Darby Creek, Crum Creek, Chester Creek, Ridley Creek, Cobbs Creek, and Brandywine Creek."

Joe discussed with the Darby Creek Valley Association the idea of bringing together the other organizations and eventually the municipalities that there will be one holistic approach, which will include the resources to support the new mapping.

Joe grew up in the Darby Creek Watershed in Springfield Township. After graduating from

Cardinal O'Hara High School, he attended the US Naval Academy. He served in the Navy 31 years, attaining the rank of Vice Admiral. Between six tours at sea, Joe earned a master's degree in Public Administration and a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. Joe also served in the Clinton Administration as the Director for Defense Policy on the National Security Council staff at the White House. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever to serve in the U.S. Congress.

The DCVA is an all volunteer, nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and enhancement of all the Darby Creek watershed's resources, including water, wildlife, historical sites, and the floodplain. The Darby Creek watershed encompasses three counties in southeastern Pennsylvania (Montgomery, Delaware, and Philadelphia) and eventually flows into the Delaware River at Tinicum, PA. DCVA is working to implement a volunteer monitoring network ("StreamWatch") in the Darby Creek watershed which has strong environmental education component and reaches out to local schools and stream-side residents.

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